

Rosalie G. Cartwright, Co-chairman  
CA Communities for Water Protection: Chico-Durham Area  
3986 Ord Ferry Road  
Chico, CA 95928  
Sept. 21, 1999

Mr. Lester Snow, Executive Director  
CALFED Bay-Delta Program  
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Snow:

### **CA COMMUNITIES FOR WATER PROTECTION**

CA Communities for Water Protection: Chico-Durham Area (CCWP) is a grass roots organization formed because we groundwater users are not represented by the Butte County Water Commission and our concerns are not heard nor acknowledged by the Butte County Board of Supervisors. Of the **nine** Board of Supervisor appointed Water Commissioners **seven could profit from water sales, one** is a rice marketer with marketing connections to some of the other **seven**, and only **one** has no perceived conflict.

Because of the above scenario, we wrote and circulated a petition dealing with the risks of water transfers and the protections necessary for the citizens who **are the third parties** and have no benefit from water sales. 4000 signatures of Butte County residents **who fear and do not want water transfers** were collected in a very short time by just a few members. **4,000 is a very significant large number.** We believe that CALFED must consider the content of the petition and the peril of the majority of the people of Butte County.

To add to our fears the Water Commission proposed and the Board of Supervisions approved a permit fee schedule which makes it possible to transfer water at a very economical rate for the water transferors. They are able to share costs by applying under the umbrella of a district or a combination of districts. However, all this has been done before any implementation of Measure G with provisions to protect the majority of Butte Co who depend totally on groundwater.

How does CALFED deal with a situation in which the groundwater users are not provided protection by local government while local government is already prepared to begin with water transers? Butte County has ignored the major part of its population. The petition shows the community standard and definition for local

control for Butte Co. CALFED has repeatedly said that it will heed local support and that water transfers will be voluntary. If this is not followed, CALFED **will completely lose its credibility.**

## **REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD**

Calfed's timing has virtually **eliminated Stakeholder** participation from the almond industry, the **number one crop** in Butte County, sometimes alternating with rice. While the almond growers are out working around the clock to bring their crop in -- the **only time of the year for them to earn money**, CALFED has scheduled meetings and the deadline for comments.

We ask that the review and comment period be extended to the end of November when **all harvests** will be done and the people in agriculture will be able to participate.

Agriculture is the most important industry in Butte County. It is vital that you do this extension because groundwater users are the target of the source of water transfers and most of the agriculture in Butte Co. is totally groundwater dependent.

## **THIRD PARTY IMPACTS**

We remember well the Cherokee Strip Fiasco of the Drought Water Bank when there were unresolved damages ranging from contaminated and inaccessible domestic water supply from wells, losses in farm crops, forced pump repair and extensions, and impacts to native vegetation. Legal remedy was not an option because of the prohibitive cost to the third parties and the great wealth gained by those who had sold water.

There is nothing in CALFED'S document that adds to the implied protections that were in place in 1994 and nothing that Butte Co. has added to its Ordinance to improve the situation.

Other third parties numerous in Butte Co. are the domestic well owners. They are virtually ignored everywhere and there are probably 14,000 of them in Butte Co. Putting them together would make a sizable city for Butte Co. Would CALFED willingly sacrifice a city? Domestic wells owners are very vulnerable and would be the first to be impacted because of the shallowness of their wells.

## **CONCLUSION**

While we have many concerns, we have been unable to study and respond to your

document because of its complexity, the requirements of earning a living from agriculture, and the time of the comment period. **Extending the comment period** will help in this regard.

It is imperative that CALFED be aware of who controls water in Butte County, and abide by its own promises to honor local support which is **not for water transfers and enriching a small segment of the population through water sales while impacting those who must depend on groundwater.**

Sincerely,



Rosalie Cartwright  
Co-chairman

Enclosures:

Petition to Board of Supervisors signed by over 4,000 residents

News and Review article "Conflict of Interest ? concerning Water Commission members